Research in Biotechnology

233. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have launched a scheme for funding bio-technology research by small and medium organizations;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme and the status of its implementation; and

(c) the details of any other incentives that Government are planning for promoting research in biotechnology in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Department of Biotechnology has launched the new scheme "Small Business Innovation Research Initiative (SBIRI)" to promote public-private-partnership in the country. The SBIRI scheme will operate in two phases viz. SBIRI Phase-I which will cover highly risky, innovative, early stage, pre-proof-of-concept research and SBIRI Phase-II is for late development and commercialization of innovative research leads. The advertisement seeking proposals under the scheme for private units was issued on 29th Septemeber 2005 in various Newspapers. The proposals received in response to the advertisement have been scrutinized by the Technical Screening Committee. The detailed information of the new scheme i.e. SBIRI is available on the Website of the department (www.dbtindia.org).

(c) The Indian biotech Industry is facilitated by the Government through different ways which include relief in custom duties on biotech products wherever necessary, permitting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) up to 100% in biotech sector, and keeping biotech industry out of compulsory licensing.

Quality of research

234. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the quality and quantity of science studies and research at the university level has been declining;